

Serial No. 10/605,205

9

LAW 0101 PUS

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application with all claims being retained. As stated in the Office Action, the drawings were objected to for minor informalities.

Regarding the merits, claims 10 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as his invention. Also, claims 1-4, 6, 8-10, 14, 15, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Liebeck patent (U.S. No. 1,151,887). Moreover, claims 5, 11-13, and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Liebeck patent in view of the Rao patent (U.S. No. 5,439,521). Additionally, Claim 7 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Liebeck patent in view of the Marino patent (U.S. 5,897,074). Furthermore, claims 1-6, 8, and 14-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Coon patent (U.S. No. 2,494,376). Also, claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Coon patent in view of the Marino patent. In addition, claims 9-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Rao patent in view of the Coon patent. Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Coon patent in view of the Pinion patent (U.S. No. 5,680,978). Finally, claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over the Coon patent.

By this Amendment, independent claim 1 now recites the limitation of the one-piece contoured sleeve being a deformable sheet that generally is folded for forming the tubular portion and the mounting portion. This amendment has been made only for purposes of clarifying the subject matter of the invention. It will be appreciated that none of the prior art of record teaches or suggests this limitation.

Serial No. 10/605,205

10

LAW 0101 PUS

In addition, independent claims 8 and 18 recite the mounting portion including a front section extending from a front side of the tubular portion and a separate rear section extending from a rear side of the tubular portion. The front section and the rear section comprise opposing ends of the sheet comprising the one-piece contoured sleeve. Also, the amendment has only been made for clarifying the subject matter of the invention and does not disclaim any limitation of the original subject matter. One skilled in the art will understand that none of the prior art of record teaches or suggests the limitations of amended claims 8 and 18.

The Objections To The Drawings:

The Examiner objected to the drawings for failing to show the subject matter recited in claims 12 and 13. In addition, the Examiner also objected to Figure 3B for not including the reference number 14, as shown in Figure 3A.

Accordingly, the Applicants have submitted herewith two (2) sheets of drawings to cure the Examiner's objections. Specifically, one sheet includes new Figure 4B, which illustrates the subject matter recited in claims 12 and 13. In addition, the other sheet includes Figure 3B, which shows reference number 14 as shown in Figure 3A. The Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the drawings are in a condition for allowance.

The Objections To The Claims:

The Examiner suggested amending claim 18 to replace the term "element" with "portion" and also replace the term "covering" with "cover." In response, the Applicant has adopted the Examiner's suggestion and amended the application accordingly.

The Examiner further contended that the term "rib" of claim 12 and the term "groove" of claim 13 were not shown in the drawings. For that reason, the Applicant has renamed original Figure 4 as Figure 4A and also added Figure 4B,

Serial No. 10/605,205

11

LAW 0101 PUS

which illustrates an annular rib extending from the tubular portion and a groove formed in the endcap for receiving the rib.

In addition, the Examiner objected to claim 10 and suggested that the term "element" should be changed to "portion" and the term "covering" should be changed to "cover." The Applicant has adopted the Examiner's suggestion and thanks the Examiner for her assistance in this matter.

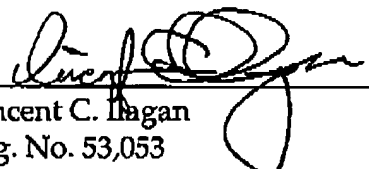
Moreover, the Examiner objected to claim 10 because she argued that it is not clear how "edge portion" is related to "edge" in claim 9. However, claim 10 does not depend from claim 9. For that reason, it will be appreciated that there is no connection between the edge portion recited in claim 10 and the edge recited in claim 9. For clarity, however, the Applicant has amended claim 9 and replaced the term "edge" with the term "said distal portion."

For the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-20 are in a condition for allowance.

Conclusion:

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicant submits that claims 1-20 are allowable. The Applicant invites the Examiner to telephone the undersigned attorney at (248) 223-9500, if any unresolved matters remain.

Respectfully submitted,
ARTZ & ARTZ, P.C.



Vincent C. Hagan
Reg. No. 53,053
28333 Telegraph Road, Ste. 250
Southfield, MI 48034

Attorney for Applicant(s)

Date: January 13, 2005

